

# Arms Control: What We Should Do

America's arms control goals have been vague and poorly understood by the public. Our tactics have been short-term, and our strategy ambiguous. Our patience at the negotiating table has been short-lived. Our timing has too often been driven by election considerations and our expectations have swung between euphoria and despair.

Three arms control treaties with the Soviet Union have been signed (by presidents Nixon, Ford and Carter) but have not been ratified by the Senate. This may demonstrate that our "separation of powers" is alive and well, but it also raises serious questions as to whether any American president can conclude an arms control treaty any more.

## The Setting

The United States is now abiding (without formal agreement) by a SALT treaty that President Reagan himself declared "fatally flawed." While awaiting leverage from newly announced but as yet unapproved strategic programs, we are not renegotiating this unratified treaty. Testimony indicates it will be at least the late 1980s before any new strategic programs close the "window of vulnerability" and bring us back to "parity." Several key parts of the recently announced strategic program, which are not yet well-defined, will have major arms control implications.

We are about to begin negotiations with the Soviets on tactical nuclear weapons, an area in which the United States has little leverage and NATO is at a pronounced military disadvantage. These negotiations provide the Soviet Union a considerable opportunity to prevent the long overdue NATO tactical nuclear force modernization. They also create an increasingly unrealistic separation between strategic and theater nuclear weapons and allow the Soviets skillfully to manipulate growing European skepticism of American leadership.

Under these circumstances, should we be puzzled when we look over our shoulder and our allies aren't following our lead? They don't know where we're going. Do we? Whether we like it or not, our arms control efforts and NATO's future are now linked. A clear, consistent arms control approach that enjoys the support of Congress and the American people is a national security imperative.

## Continuity

If the American position on arms control is to have more credibility with our allies, our adversaries and the American people, we must bring some continuity to our process for formulating and executing arms control policy and integrating it with military policies. We must develop a clear set of long-term

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goals, objectives and priorities that can be understood by the public, our allies and, ideally, even our adversaries.

Procedures within our government must be developed to ensure that strategic weapons programs and arms control measures mesh together better. We can no longer separate the two functions, giving civilians the job of controlling arms and the military the job of procuring weapons. U.S. military planners must have a greater input in shaping our arms control objectives so that arms control measures can also be treated as viable instruments for attaining required security objectives.

For more than a decade, the Soviets have had essentially the same people negotiating SALT. During that same period, the United States has had six chief negotiators and the major support staff has been changed many times. Why shouldn't the Soviets be confident they can wait out the Americans? Why shouldn't our allies and our adversaries believe that our patience and our horizons are limited in the arms control arena?

One way to improve arms control continuity would be to upgrade substantially the current General Advisory Committee on Arms Control. The present committee is co-located with the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and, rightly or wrongly, is viewed as an adjunct of that agency. We should consider creating a bipartisan presidential commission to be the board of directors for our arms control efforts.

The commission would be appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate for overlapping terms long enough to give it independence and continuity. It could not and should not supersede the constitutional prerogatives of the executive branch to negotiate, and the Senate to ratify, treaties. It could, however, be asked to bring some coherence to our arms control philosophy and implementation. Reporting directly to the president, the board should have a broad charter to consider arms control under the rubric of overall national security and foreign policy.

It could provide a publicly respected review board to:

- Help formulate long- and short-term

arms control objectives, goals and priorities consistent with our national security and our defense policies;

- Monitor negotiations; and
- Keep the American public informed of the goals, objectives and priorities of our arms control efforts in a way that can be separated from partisan political considerations.

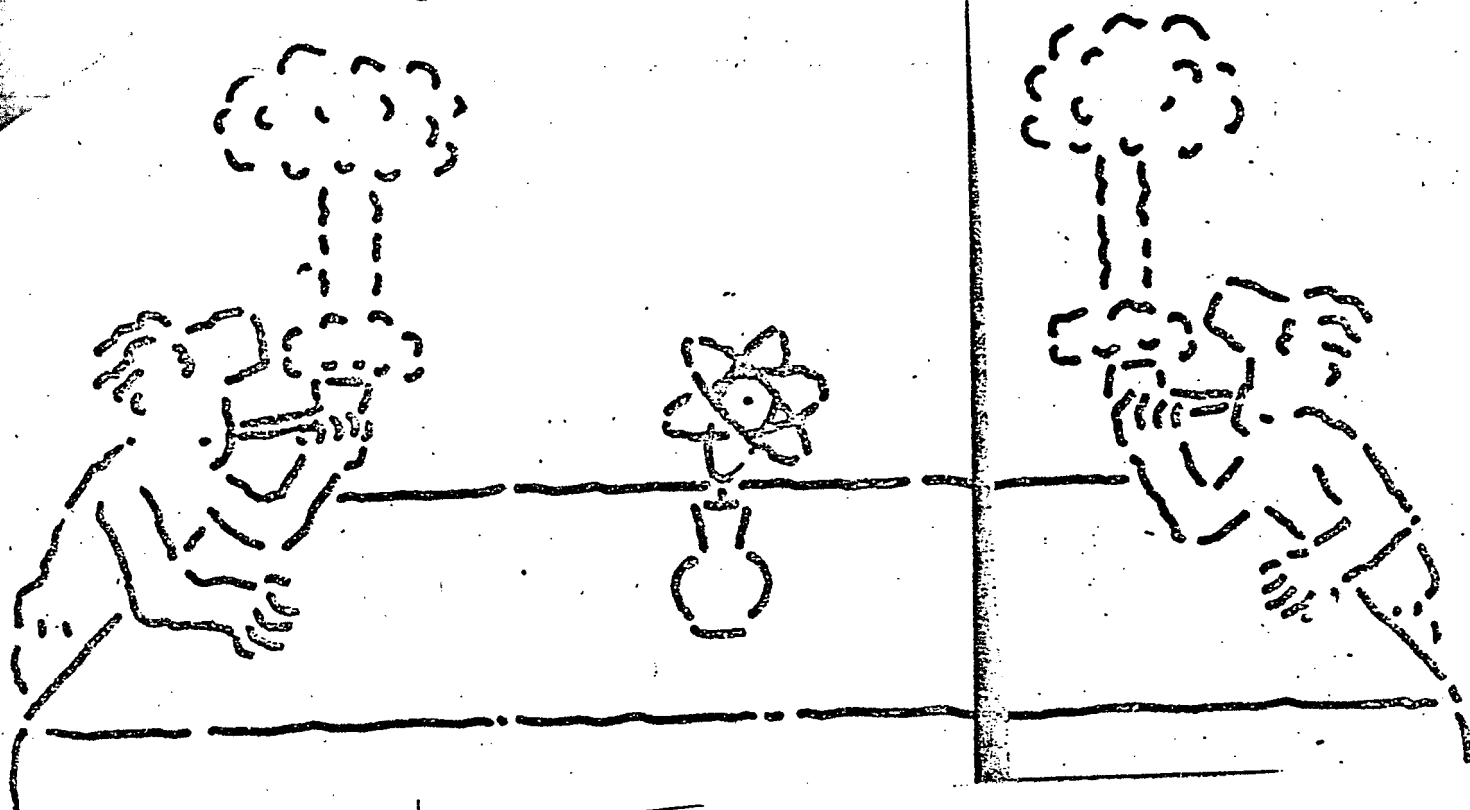
## Stability

The U.S. arms control process has had a narrow scope that undermines its potential positive impact in military terms and in international opinion. Over the last decade, most of our arms control effort has been directed at limiting the size of nuclear arsenals rather than avoiding or limiting the potential use of nuclear weapons in crises—so-called "crisis-stability." We hope to reduce the number of weapons in the long run, but reductions in numbers do not automatically or necessarily increase crisis stability. We hope to save money with a sound arms control agreement, but an even larger strategic budget would be well worth the money if the result were the reduced likelihood of nuclear war. With thousands of nuclear warheads available to each side, control of their use in crises is more important than reduction of numbers, cost or technological development.

We must begin to think about arms control initiatives that will address crisis stability.

How would the Russians react if a low-flying aircraft with U.S. markings delivered a nuclear device on one of their cities? Do they have the capability to determine the true origin of the aircraft? Would stunned and angry Russians react calmly and cautiously or would they draw immediate conclusions and launch a nuclear attack against America? How would we react if a nuclear device exploded in a ship of unknown origin in San Francisco harbor and obliterated the city? Will we sit idly by while the possibilities grow in the years ahead that a fanatical leader may attempt to rid the world of the superpowers by pulling a Third World trigger?

Are these unreal science fiction fantasies or is there a growing possibility of a third-party or terrorist use of nuclear weapons? At my request last spring, Gen. Richard Ellis, then



commander of the Strategic Air Command, undertook the evaluation of the possibility of a third party triggering a superpower nuclear exchange under a variety of scenarios. Unfortunately, this evaluation showed that there are real and developing dangers in this area.

Do the U.S.S.R. and the United States have a mutual interest in preventing a Third World trigger or a terrorist use of nuclear weapons? Should both nations have a mutual interest in working together to be able immediately to identify the source of a nuclear strike from a third country or from a terrorist attack? Can arms control efforts be made relevant to the growing dangers of this type of nuclear catalyst?

The point is not to frighten, but to stimulate the best minds in both the United States and the Soviet Union to think soberly about the future potential for destruction facing the world. There are an increasing number of scenarios that could precipitate the outbreak of nuclear war that neither side anticipated or intended. By 1990, our government believes that more than 20 nations may have the industrial capability to build nuclear weapons. Terrorist possession of nuclear warheads in the future cannot be dismissed. Several nations are now also developing rockets for "commercial purposes." The simple fact is that we really don't have an international framework or mechanism for quickly and decisively controlling or containing these possibilities. In a world growing more dangerous with proliferation of nuclear weapons and delivery systems, the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as other nuclear powers, have growing reason to work together to prevent nuclear war.

### U.S.-Soviet Cooperation

While there is still time, serious thought should be given by ourselves and the Russians to our possible mutual interest in establishing a military crisis control center for the monitoring and containment of nuclear weapons used by third parties or terrorist groups. This could take the form of joint U.S.-Soviet information-sharing combined with a multinational center for crisis management. A precedent for this type of effort can be found in the four-power Berlin center for movement of aircraft in the Berlin corridors.

The crisis management group could be a permanent standing team of highly qualified civilian and military personnel, in full operation 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with access to the top political and military leadership. Its purpose would be to provide a mechanism that gives each side more confidence in the facts during a nuclear crisis. It would afford the leaders of both nations a better chance to determine, independently and jointly, the origin and parties responsible for any explosion of nuclear weapons. It has the potential for encouraging cooperation and building confidence between the superpowers, even when political relations are at a low ebb. These steps could contribute to crisis stability. They could also add a significant degree of deterrence to third-country or terrorist attempts to light the nuclear bonfire.

This will not be a simple task completed quickly, but the discussions and negotiations should begin. These negotiations could be broadened to address other mutual arms control steps; such as confidence-building measures to enhance verification, strengthening the U.S.-Soviet hot line, as well as reducing

the vulnerabilities of command, control and communications of both nations. We could also begin discussions on a possible nuclear weapons deployment agreement that would lengthen the warning time both nations would have of a nuclear attack.

The nuclear powers must begin to improve our capacity to control a nuclear crisis—regardless of origin. Our nation must adopt clear goals that establish a foundation for arms control that has long-term continuity and less vulnerability to domestic partisan politics. We must find an arms control policy we can live with.